

Our efforts both in Washington and here in the 7th District to overcome the economic challenges we face together continue. I am proud to have helped pass historic and long-awaited health care reform that not only fulfills a moral obligation to make quality, affordable care accessible to all Americans, but also addresses the economic necessity of slowing the rise of costs and reducing our deficit.

This legislation is not perfect and I wish we had reached the end result without a process marred by deal-making and false claims that only added to a distrust of Washington that has unfortunately developed over many years and must be repaired. However, this reform will finally change an unsustainable system under which millions of Americans are a job loss away from losing their health insurance. By taking on one of the biggest challenges facing our nation, we are going to cut more than \$130 billion from the deficit this decade and another \$1.2 trillion in the next.

Many of the benefits will be experienced this year including: tax credits for small businesses to make employee coverage more affordable; beginning to close the Medicare Part D Donut Hole; requiring new private plans to cover preventive services with no co-payments; prohibiting health plans from denying coverage to children with pre-existing conditions and from placing lifetime caps on coverage; and providing new investment in training programs to increase the number of doctors who chose primary care as their specialty.

Health care is the most personal of any public policy. My constituents have the right to – and should in fact – question what is in this bill, how it will impact them

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and the reasoning behind its provisions.

To this end, I have made information available to help answer these questions on my

[we](#)
[b](#)
[site](#)

Moving forward, we face many other challenges to provide economic opportunities for everyone, including comprehensive assistance

to small businesses which are responsible for more than 70 percent of all jobs;
fair treatment of women in the workplace

;
and benefits for our Veterans. You can read on for an update on the ways in which I have been addressing these and other issues in the District and in Washington

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DC

. In addition, I have included information about upcoming opportunities for students and announcements about resources and programs available to you.

Sincerely,

Joe Sestak

Member of Congress

Congressman Joe Sestak is now on Twitter. You can receive updates on the Congressman's daily events as well as links to information about legislation, YouTube clips and photographs from around the District. Sign up [@JoeSestak](#).

*For the most complete and up-to-date information on Congressman Sestak's work in Washington in the 7th Congressional District, please visit <http://sestak.house.gov>.

If you need assistance with a problem for which the Congressman can help, please call his District Office at 610-892-8623.

You can send an email to Congressman Sestak [here](#).

Creating Jobs, Protecting Small Businesses

In speaking with small business owners throughout the 7th Congressional District and across Pennsylvania, it is clear that they still struggle to obtain the credit they need, not only to grow their businesses, but to simply remain open and they are wary of adding to their payroll without having an incentive to do so. To address those concerns in the comprehensive way that is needed, in January I introduced the Small Business Recovery Act of 2010. This legislation provides the urgently required assistance to remedy problems that caused employment to stagnate and addresses key job-creating measures that were left out of the House-passed "jobs bill." In Pennsylvania, 98 percent of employers are small businesses who are responsible for more than 70 percent of all jobs. This legislation will help in the fight to return our employment rate to healthy levels. The specific provisions of the Small Business Recovery Act of 2010 can be found on my [website](#).

Moving towards Gender Equity

In October 2009, the Center for American Progress and Maria Shriver released [The Shriver Report:](#)

[Woman's Nation Changes Everything](#)

, a glass-shattering report which documented that, for the first time in our history, half of all U.S.

workers are women and that

mothers are the primary breadwinners or co-breadwinners in nearly two-thirds of American families. In February, as a response to the findings of this report, I presented

The Gender Equity Act of 2010

alongside two representatives from the Center for American Progress – one who co-edited the Shriver Report – and two area businesswomen to a standing room only crowd

. Having come from a big family with six sisters, I know first hand that women, now

more than ever, are making contributions that are changing our world for the better. This comprehensive legislation will address challenges of gender inequity and offers several major policy initiatives

based on the Report's specific policy recommendations, including enhancing small business opportunities for women and making Social Security fair for women. Detailed information on the provisions of the Gender Equity Act of 2010 and its major goals is available

[here](#)

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Calling for Federal Funding and Earmark Reform

I have drafted legislation that would strengthen the federal grant making process, increasing access and allowing for greater local input.

This legislation would also end the earmark process

in favor of this enhanced federal grant system. In January, I also co-sponsored The Local Fiscal Assistance Act, submitted by fellow Pennsylvania Congressman Paul Kanjorski, which would distribute funding through block grants directly to municipalities

which would help

local governments maintain

services

without

raising

taxes

during these especially challenging economic times. More information about these pieces of legislation can be found

[here](#)

. Meanwhile, as long as the appropriations process does exist, I

continue to

ensure a transparent and accountable system

is in place which

gives my constituents a fair chance to access

available funding

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I was first elected, my office

has published

an annual Grants and Appropriations Directory which is a one-stop shop

for

learning

about funding opportunities and provide

s a level playing field through equal access

to

information.

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here is an entire section of my website dedicated to

[grants and appropriations](#)

which where you can find the

[Pennsylvania 7th Congressional District Grant and Resource Directory](#)

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a variety of resources about federal, state, local, and private grants, and the details of all

appropriations secure

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Advocating for Accountability for our Veterans

In light of several reports of inadequacies in the care of Pennsylvania Veterans uncovered in the past year, I remain committed to ensuring our Veterans receive the quality care that they deserve. Recently I had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Robert A. Petzel, the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Under Secretary for Health. During our [meeting](#)

, we discussed how my office can work with the VA to assure our citizens, Veterans, and their families that transparency, oversight, and accountability are integral to every aspect of the VA's management and leadership. To that end, I introduced the Transparency for America's Heroes Act

. This bill would direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make available on the VA website redacted records and documents created by the VA as part of a medical quality-assurance program. This would provide parity with the current practice of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, which publishes nursing home inspection reports online.

More information on this legislation is available

[here](#)

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Providing Resources to Our Region

Working Families Resources Summit

On Saturday, February 27, 2010, I hosted my second “Working Families Resources Summit” at Interboro High School. The event featured a service fair that connected several hundred constituents with nearly 60 government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other sources of aid and assistance. The exhibitors provided a variety of services including housing relief, employment, adult education, credit counseling, legal advice, elder and child care, health services, and more. For information about the more than 70 participating organizations and the services they provide, as well as others available to assist our Working Families, please visit my [website](#).

Veterans Summit

I hosted my fourth Veterans Summit at Ridley High School on March 8, 2010. I believe it is my duty, as a Member of Congress and Veteran, to help inform my fellow Veterans and their family members of the benefits available to them, especially those who recently served so that these young men and women can make a successful transition to civilian life. The Veterans Summit’s service fair afforded the opportunity to connect local Veterans, Active Duty Military Members, and their families with representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs; Veterans Service Organizations; companies interested in hiring or doing business with Veterans; local Colleges and Universities to help Veterans utilize their 21st Century GI Bill benefits; and others that provide services to the Veterans community. For more information about the participating organizations and the benefits and services they provide, please review the event’s [program](#) on my website.

Honoring Two Local Heroes

During the Veterans Summit, it was my honor to present Judith Nickel of Brookhaven with the Silver Star awarded posthumously to her brother,
SPC4 Barry
Burnite

,
US
Army
, for the gallantry he displayed
fighting for our nation
in
Vietnam

. You can read the Army's citation honoring Specialist Four
Burnite
[here](#)

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Barry

,
a 1961 graduate of
Springfield
High School
, worked for PECO before joining the U.S. Army in 1964. He was deployed to
South Vietnam
to serve with the 2
n
d Platoon, Company
A
, 2
n
d Battalion, 7th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division. On November 17, 1965

,
Special
ist
Four
Burnite
was killed in action during the Battle of Landing Zone Albany in the
la
Drang
Valley, South Vietnam.

I was also honored to introduce H.R. 4547, which honors the memory of Capt. Luther H. Smith, Jr., U.S. Army Air Forces, by designating the Post Office at 119 Station Road in Cheyney

, Pennsylvania in Delaware County

as the "Captain Luther H. Smith, U.S. Army Air Forces Post Office." This bill passed the House of Representatives on March 10, 2010 and now awaits passage in the Senate. Capt Smith, who passed away in December at age 89, was one of the original Tuskegee Airmen, a highly decorated World War II prisoner of war, a recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal, the first African-American aerospace engineer hired by General Electric in its Missile and Space Operations in Philadelphia, a loving husband and father, and a longtime resident of Villanova, PA. More information on Capt. Smith's life and H

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4547 can be found [here](#).

Opportunities for Students

Benjamin Franklin once said, "Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn."

Throughout the year, my office offers numerous opportunities for high school and college students of the

7th Congressional District to gain a better understanding of how our government operates. For more information about opportunities available to students, please visit the students section of my

[website](#)

New information was recently added about [Congressional Internships](#) , the [Congressional Art Competition](#) , and the [Congressional Page Program](#) (applications are due by Monday, March 29th).

Service Academy Nominations

It was a privilege, as a 1974 graduate of the United States Naval Academy, to recognize the 31 high school seniors and college students who will receive a nomination from my office to our four national service academies (United States Military Academy, United States Naval Academy, United States Air Force Academy, and United States Merchant Marine Academy) for the Class of 2014. These young men and women represent the best and the brightest that the 7th Congressional District has to offer.

Despite the highest level of competition, last year 15 of those I nominated were offered appointments to the service academy of their choice. Typically, a Congressional office is considered to be outstanding when it has twenty total cadets or midshipmen at those four academies in any given year.

I believe that the fact that there are currently over 50

total
cadets and midshipmen representing the 7
th
Congressional District
across
these four academies speaks to
the quality of our communities in the 7
th
Congressional District, as well as
the hard work and dedication of my selection committees.

For those interested in receiving a nomination to attend one of our service academies,
information can be found [here](#) . My office will host our [2010 Service Academy Day](#) at Valley
Forge
Military
Academy
and College on Sunday, April 18, 2010 at 10:00 AM
in Mellon Hall
. Representatives from the four
s
ervice
a
cademies as well as the United States Coast Guard Academy will be on hand to speak about
the application process with students, parents, and guidance counselors.

Announcements

In order to keep my constituents aware of as many services and opportunities offered by

government agencies and non-profit organizations as possible, there is a new [announcements](#) section on my website.

There you can find information on a variety of topics such as the 2010 Census, income tax filing assistance in advance of the April 15

th deadline, scholarship opportunities for students, Passport Day in the USA 2010, FEMA Flood Preparedness Guidance, the United

Through Reading Program, the Consumer Credit Counseling Service of the Delaware Valley

's free financial boot camp, and more.